

November 26, 1963

Mr. J. E. Curry
Chief of Police

Subject: Security Of Police Parking
And Prisoner Loading Area
Sunday, November 24, 1963

Sir:

At approximately 9:00 A.M., Sunday, November 24, 1963 I discussed the need for coverage against possible violence around the City Hall with Lieutenant R. S. Pierce. I instructed him to call three squads from their district assignments from the three stations and pull four from Headquarters Station, getting two man squads where possible. The officers were to be in Central Station with their squad cars parked on the street, available for immediate use but dispersed in parking, not later than 9:30 A.M. Out of thirteen squads we obtained a total of nineteen (19) patrolmen. Supervisors at the station for the security were Lieutenant Pierce, Sergeant P. T. Dean, Sergeant Putnam, Sergeant Steele, and I. Lieutenant Wiggins was in the Jail Office.

Lieutenant Pierce instructed Sergeant Dean to secure all entrances and exits to the parking and prisoner loading area, then clear the basement of all personnel other than police, and reserves. Sergeant Putnam was instructed to assist in the assignment.

The area in which the prisoner Oswald would be escorted was to be thoroughly searched. Areas searched were the cars parked in the basement, including their trunks, and engine compartments, the tops of all pipes, and air conditioning ducts, the service rooms opening into the basement were to be locked after clearing them of personnel. The building elevators were out off on the first floor so they could not be used to reach the basement and the parking attendants were sent from the basement to the first floor of the City Hall with instructions to remain with the elevators to prevent tampering. The City Hall service elevator is a self-service type but had an operator. This man was instructed that he was not to go below the first floor until notified. The service elevator from the sub basement of the Police and Courts Building exit, into the basement parking area and has no doors to lock so a reserve officer was stationed there.

The sergeants used a total of seventeen²(17) regular and reserve officers to execute the search. The extra officers were held in the sergeant's room at my office and the reserves were retained in the assembly room. These officers were not permitted in the basement to insure no confusion in the systematic search.

After the area was secured and cleared only officers, reserves, and accredited news press were permitted to re-enter. Identification of the news personnel was made by their press credentials. All civilian employees of the Department were cleared from the basement lobby and instructed to remain at their desk.

Officer R. C. Nelson and a reserve officer were stationed in the hall leading to the jail service windows. The door from the jail to the lobby remained locked and the public used the first window, set at an angle, to conduct jail business.

Detective Beaty and Lowery remained with the officers during most of the period the parking and prisoner area was closed off. Everyone conducting business at the jail was scrutinized and if they did not appear to have legitimate business, they were conducted from the basement.

There was little traffic on Main and no one loitering. A large crowd was gathering on Commerce. I had everyone removed from the City Hall side (north) of Commerce to the south side. Sergeant Steele and Reserve Harrison checked the buildings opposite the basement drive for possible snipers.

The information received from the FBI by Captain Frazier was: two calls from males stated "one hundred of us will kill Oswald before he gets to the County Jail". Due to this and the crowds formation I built up my personnel on the Commerce Street side.

I called Homicide and told Detective Beck of the parking area check and asked if Captain Fritz wanted uniformed officers to proceed and follow the transfer vehicle. He said Captain Fritz was with the prisoner and they would let me know. I prepared three plain and three marked cars to use either type Homicide desired.

I was contacted by Chief Stevenson and Chief Lumpkin regarding an armored car. It was to back into the drive as far as possible from Commerce. When it arrived two more officers were stationed at the bottom of the Commerce Street ramp with instructions that no one was to pass up or down the ramp after the prisoner passed them. Due to its height, the armored car could only be backed in a short distance.

Before the arrival of the Armored Car, Chief Lumpkin, Chief Stevenson, and I discussed the route and traffic obstructions. They were reportedly six hundred (600) people around the County Jail. I instructed Sergeant Steele to place a regular officer at each traffic light with his squad car close by. The lead car would flash its lights as they approached and the officer would cut all opposing traffic. After the vehicle passed they were to enter their cars and follow to the County Jail to assist with any trouble. The entire traffic detail was in the County Jail Area.

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Sergeant Steele contacted Captain Lawrence for additional officers for intersection coverage. As the vehicle cleared the city hall all officers and reserves at the City Hall were to report by a parallel route to the County Jail. I would use Channel Two and tell Sergeant Steele to cut it. He had a motorcycle officer to send to Elm and Field to instruct the officers on the corners to divert all traffic from Elm between Field and Houston. Regular traffic was heavy.

After the Armored Car arrived we sent a plain car out the Main Street side. This was the lead car and contained Lieutenant Pierce driving, Sergeant Putnam on the right front, and Sergeant B. J. Maxey in the rear.

A Homicide Detective pulled a plain car on the ramp behind the armored car then another Homicide Detective pulled in behind him and attempted to straighten his car and back up. Several reserve officers and I were attempting to push the news people back to give the vehicle room to maneuver. I was pushing several people back at the left front fender when the shot was fired. I assisted the officers in clearing news personnel from the prisoner and officers who were down then ordered that no one was to be permitted out of the basement.

I checked the parking area several times and saw no unauthorized personnel. I removed a number of people from the first floor and basement lobby, this was a continuous check prior to the transfer.

After the prisoner entered the ambulance and I gathered my personnel from Elm and reported to Parkland Hospital, we secured the hospital.

Respectfully submitted,


Cecil E. Talbert
Captain of Police
Patrol Division

CET/bb

YJH